UNITED
NATIONS

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/25701
30 April 1993

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 28 APRIL 1993 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF AZERBAIJAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit herewith some information concerning the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, contained in reports by independent correspondents and news agencies.

It is absolutely clear to correspondents not connected with the interests of different States in the present conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, that it is not limited to Karabakh only. The reports indicate direct involvement of Armenia in the conflict, consistently denied by the Armenian officials.

> "The war involving the former Soviet republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan has moved into a dangerous new phase ... The conflict has been altered by Armenian's capture - whether they are from Karabakh or Armenia proper is, typically, in dispute - of a broad belt of Azeri territory connecting the two. Now the integrity of Azerbaijan is at issue." (The Washington Post, 28 April 1993)

> "Fighting between the neighboring former Soviet republics in the southern Caucasus Mountains has intensified" (The Associated Press, 20 April).

> "Azerbaijan has suffered a series of setbacks in the war after Armenia carried out a major offensive early this month to broaden a land corridor between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh.
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> The offensive drew sharp criticism from the United Nations." (Agence France Presse, 22 April).

A mere look through the reports by different news agencies from the conflict zone can convince anyone slightly acquainted with geography that the scale of the territory affected, the number of displaced persons as well as the amount of high-tech armaments used in combat, makes a glaring contradiction to Armenia's claim that the war is waged by the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh.

AFP reported on 19 April, quoting ITAR-TASS News Agency: "Three Armenian fighter aircraft bombed the towns of Fizuli and Agdam, while land clashes left a number of people dead and wounded. Attacks by a MIG-23, MIG-25 and SU-25 were followed by land attacks by Armenian troops on the two towns."

The Times reported on 14 April: "One thing is certain: the Kelbadjar region was attacked from Armenia itself, to the west, as well as from Nagorno-Karabakh to the east." The Armenian Government continues to claim that only "Karabakh defence forces" are involved in the fighting, but few Western observers attach any credence to this claim.

> "The Armenians appear to have left open a corridor for the refugees to escape from Kelbadjar, possibly fearing a repetition of the adverse international response which followed the mass killing of civilians after the fall of the town of Hojali last year. However, between 5,000 and 15,000 Azerbaijani civilians remain behind Armenian lines, their fate unknown.
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> "Intervention could follow if the Armenians were to capture the area of Fizuli, to the south of Nagorno-Karabakh, and set off another wave of refugees. On the other hand, if the Armenians are wise, they will be content with the wide territories they have already captured."

New York Newsday reported on 16 April in an article titled "Armenians now tell lies in the colonial tradition", that Armenia's "flat affirmation of non-involvement in the war in Azerbaijan was but an echo of the voices from Belgrade that disclaim all connection with the conduct of the Serbs in Bosnia".

The Independent, 8 April: "The facts of recent history are in Azerbaijan's favor. It was the Armenians who sought to change the status quo. It is Armenia that has invaded Azerbaijani territory."

The Ottawa Citizen, 13 April: "In a carefully planned and well executed military operation, the Armenians swooped on the remainder of the Azerbaijani territory separating Karabakh from Armenia.

> "In a matter of days the Armenians captured the Kelbadjar and north Lachin districts.
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> "If they choose, the Armenians could at any time capture the town of Fizuli, giving them control of another swathe of Western Azerbaijan."

The Manchester Guardian Weekly, 18 April, quoted a Western observer after his front-line visit: "I feel pity for Armenians, because this is going to bring a lot of suffering to them. They will become more isolated. They will lose support. They will come ever weaker to the negotiating table because it is extremely difficult to justify what happened." The article continued with the following: "To the Armenians, linking Karabakh to Armenia at the Azerbaijan's expense would seem at best to create a de facto bigger Armenia, at worst to leave them with a strong hand at the negotiating table.

"But the latest offensive may prove Armenia's biggest mistake. A country cannot launch a fully mechanized, partly airborne attack and claim to be the innocent victim in war.

"The offensive makes a nonsense of Yerevan's insistence that it is the Karabakh Armenians who are fighting Azerbaijan, without Armenia's help."

The real causes of the war can be understood from the statements of Armenian officials themselves. Agence France Presse, 17 April: "The independent authorities in Stepanakert as well as Armenia's Defense Minister insist that 'the old borders of the Soviet empire should be redrawn following the lines of the people's right to self-determination'. They insist that Armenia's borders will be pushed just up to the Araxes river, the border between Azerbaijan and Iran."

Everything mentioned can be confirmed by the latest information from the conflict zone which indicates that the Armenian troops are continuing their attacks on different Azerbaijani regions. According to the Ministry of Defence of Azerbaijan, on the morning of 29 April 1993, the Zangelan region of Azerbaijan has been under artillery and missile fire from the territory of the Kafan region of Armenia, several villages of the Kedabek region of Azerbaijan have been shelled from the territory of Krasnoselsk region of Armenia. As a result, the number of casualties among the civilian population of Azerbaijan is constantly increasing.

I hope the facts mentioned in this letter, provided by independent sources, will be helpful to the Security Council in order to understand the essence of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, which can really endanger peace and security in the world, to make a just and exact assessment of the situation, to condemn the aggression against Azerbaijan, a State Member of the United Nations, and to undertake the appropriate measures in accordance with the United Nations Charter.

I would highly appreciate it if this letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hassan A. HASSANOV
Ambassador
Permanent Representative